

In Memory of Larry Johnson and the Little Free Press, Memorial Edition



I am sad to announce the death of my father, Larry Johnson, A.K.A., Ernest Mann. He was found dead in his house trailer on March 12, 1996. The police investigated his death as a homicide.

He will be remembered for devoting his life to making the world a better place with his Priceless Economic System, where if everybody worked for free, then everything would be free. For the last five years he also raised his grandson, Eli. The police believe Eli killed his grandfather and later committed suicide.

I will remember Larry as being a great father to me. He gave me a lot of love and helped build me into the strong person I am.

Below are some comments from some of his friends and his last unfinished edition of the Little Free Press.

Rod Johnson

In Loving Memory Of Eli & Larry Johnson

There is so much to say about Larry. After being his friend for 24 years, I could go on for hours. The most important thing to say is this: For the last 25 years, Larry devoted his thoughts and work to trying to make a better world. As many of you know, he created the "Little Free Press", in which he expressed all of his ideas on why and how to do this.

Larry was one of those rare human beings whose beliefs and way of life were one, and he showed this on a large scale, in his efforts as Ernest Mann, and on a smaller personal level, in his efforts to help his grandson Eli.

It was my privilege to know Larry. The only way I can think to express my admiration and respect for him, is to continue, in every thought and deed, to try and make a better world.

I knew and loved Eli, like a son, for 17 years. He, like Larry, was part of our family. I think you can see, from the pictures, and the following words, written by some of his friends, that he was a bright and much-loved child.

Carol Gatts

The sadness I feel for Larry Ernest Mann Johnson

goes clear through. We go so far back, that he owned an old house just across the street from one I owned, and had just sold it to Paula. We were similar and he wanted me to understand his thinking. He is, was, a philosopher, really, willing to think out loud, to go after life's common denominator in common places. Sadly, his view of utopia was very perceptive and very right, even obvious, and his reluctance to discount human nature always made me feel like a cynic.

I like to think that we are all tethered to a mother soul ship by birth and when my friend Larry crossed back past the horizon of reality we all received a portion of that which he became on earth. We can all be a little better, friendlier, more forgiving, more loving, more curious, generous, because he touched us. The tears and sadness in my eyes reflect a sunset of diamond beauty. Sail to it Larry. Sail to freedom.

Peter Dodge, Global Village

A Tribute To A Friend

Larry Johnson, aka Ernest Mann, left us last month. He died at 69. The first half of his life he was successful in business. After thinking about it at length and in depth, he decided that "business" in this "system" was helping to kill people and was killing the planet. He advocated the FREE SYSTEM, later to be called PES, the PRICELESS ECONOMIC SYSTEM. People work for free and take for free. If stuff is free, who would steal?

For 25 years or so he wrote and published the "Little Free Press". It was free always, but at times he had to charge for postage (the Post Office had not yet adopted his Free System).

Larry would have been delighted to read about Mahlon, a Rock Falls, Wisconsin carpenter whose wife was killed in a traffic accident. The insurance company offered Mahlon a \$212,000 settlement. He refused, saying, "It would do more harm than good".

Tom Dooley

(news column, "No Need For Slaves, No Room For Masters")

"It was either be sent to an institution, or become one."

Among the many West Bank "institutions", your Dad was one of the most enduring, one of the finest, one of the best.

P.S. Myself, I never believed in "The Priceless Society", but I believed in your Dad...Larry Johnson...Ernest Mann".

Everlastingly @ it, *Mike Shadick*, (excerpts from a letter)

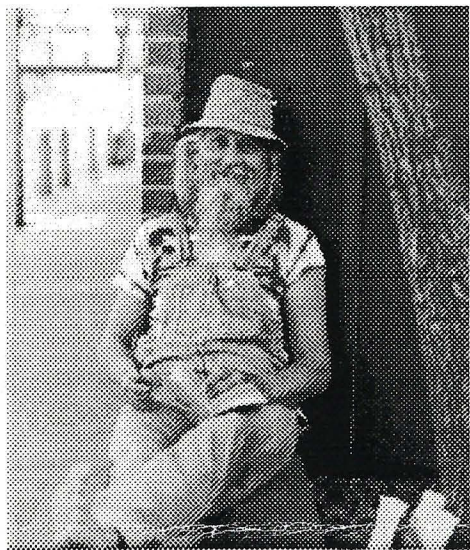
A tribute or Memorial to Earnest Mann

by his son Foster Goodwill

This article is to honor my dad, Larry Johnson, and to share these memories as a tribute to all that he has given to me and to the world. Even though it hasn't seemed terribly significant as far as people's visible responses, the fact that he cared enough about the world and it's people to dedicate the last 28 years of his life in seeking to help bring about peace in a fundamental way, attests to the love in his heart and the breadth of his spirit. (Though he might be the last to admit it.) My own lifework with children has sprung from a similar impulse that seems to have been ignited at about the same time, (the late sixties) and was engendered and nourished by the love and sight with which he raised me.

Larry was a really good dad to me, spending as much time as he could spare to be a cub scout leader, playing, camping and fishing with us, as well as imparting skills when we helped him in his side business of fixing up old houses and selling them.

He told me after I grew up that he had felt a desire after World War II to help find a way to end wars. But he was so busy with his growing family, his work, mortgages and car payments, that he had to forget about it for some time while he was stuck in the rat-race. He steered me in the direction of some good books in my teens years; satires of George Bernard Shaw, Nation Of



Sheep, by Keneth Galbraith; Subliminal seduction, by Vance Packard; and The Power Elite, by C. Wright Mills.

So when I became close to draft age during Vietnam, I headed for Canada, with his blessing. Just after that, Larry left the rat race and dedicated himself full time to helping find a solution to war, poverty and

pollution. He travelled around the country with my mom in an old cab-over-camper visiting communes, and my sister and I joined them for part of the journey. He was seriously looking at alternatives. He travelled various places around the world also to see how other peoples lived. The idea began to gestate in him that would later be coined P.E.S., the Priceless Economic System. If people refused to use money anymore and took over their places of work and gave their products away for free, the power of the elite would disappear. The profit system would collapse and dissolve. An idea too advanced, or not practical for these times it appears, yet an idea that may be a prophecy for times to come as people evolve.

He was the kind of man who lent spice to life, a real character. He caused people to think, if briefly, in a way they had never thought before. His subscribers shrank with the years, his final mailing list being only about 100. He seemed to be repeating himself pretty much, in a bit of a rut.

His work for this life was winding to a close, and he began pumping out the issues at an unprecedented rate, almost like the plants growing and seeding more rapidly when they sense an early winter approaching. His death appeared as a tragedy, but I would like to offer the idea that perhaps it was just another way to go, untimely only to our limited way of perceiving things. I believe a deeper part of him knew that he had more important work to do beyond his limited identity as Larry Johnson. So when his grandson took his life during an argument and then committed suicide, it was his time to go. Let us not mourn his passing *overly* much, but rather celebrate his life which was rich and full, lived with few regrets and for the benefit of his fellow man. I have a sense that they are both happier and freer now than they were in their bodies. I owe much to my Dad, we were close and I will miss him. Yet I am so grateful for the many happy memories he left me. My love and best wishes to you all.

Larry and Eli, we miss you

Tragedy has taken us all from shock, to anger, to sadness, to guilt, to helplessness, and back to shock. I hope that we can help each other, and hang onto each other, and somehow get to a level of forgiveness, and acceptance, and peace. If we can do that, we may finally find the strength, and a way to express the love that we feel for Larry and Eli, in our everyday lives.

I know Larry and Eli would want us to try to do that.

Carol Gatts

Murder-Suicide - Some Other Perspectives

The Memorial Service in Little Falls was held Sunday, March 24, 1996 at the Black and White Cafe. The things that one would expect to be said and done were said and done. In the Homily the Minister consoled the group with something on the order of that some things can't be or aren't understood. This is apparently the usual approach to such a tragedy, and I am not quarreling with it. However, as an astrologer, I look for lawfulness and the hidden forces behind events. I ask what are the factors that lead to an event, could it have been changed or not? The point of real astrology is to increase people's free will, and not to be fatalistic, but also to look at the nature of fate, destiny and free will.

Perhaps this was cosmically set up, involves manifestation of subtle principals, and is not just some stupid accident, or meaningless or unnatural event. As these are real events, they can be looked at with traditional astrological approaches. In looking at their [Larry and Eli] charts to see if something revealing would show up, some revealing things did show up, which I will discuss below. (Article continues at length, but is not included here.)

Joseph Osowski

Earnest Mann was a great man with a great message, but he's gone now. Although not all of us can be as devoted as he was, we can keep the discussion alive. I invite anyone who wishes to write me at the address below. The leaders may get the glory, but it's the troops that win the battles.

Duncan Ryan

POB 640

Elk River, MN 55330

Questions

Dear Ernest,

How do you handle your monthly Social Security old-age pension check?

-- Do you return it to Washington D.C./unopened? "They" are controlling you if you keep it.

LMFL

[Editor's answer: I deal with them as I would any debtor. I gave the government that money for safe keeping, thinking they would invest it wisely, so that it's value would keep up with inflation. It is my money and I expect them to return it as per our agreement. After I receive the money they have no control over what I do with it. However, should the government go broke or otherwise renege on their agreement, I will cease to receive that money. I am well aware of this. That is why I am attempting to get myself into a Personal Independence System (a PIS) so that I will be able to survive without them.]

Dear Ernest,

Are you a libertarian or an anarchist? I know you don't like labels, but I think you are close to their philosophy.

[Editor's answer. I am not either! I am a believer in PES-PIS. I think it contains the best of both ideas.

Do you believe that people that don't work shouldn't eat? What about the lazy people?

[The super-rich people don't work. Should they eat? In the present Profit/Wage System lots of people are unable to get a job. In the Priceless Economic System (PES) anyone could get a job with on-the-job-training in something they enjoyed doing. Everyone would get everything Free of charge whether they worked or not. Workers would not care if others worked or not. People enjoying their work would be glad to have consumers or else there wouldn't be a demand for their work.]

Well keep up the good work, (or is it play?) Do you believe work should be fun? There are so many different opinions, and they all have some truth.



[My work is not play. I do it because it needs to be done, if we are to have Freedom for the Individual. I get satisfaction from my work knowing I'm doing the

best I can do. Most any work could be made into fun. I guess I am just too darn serious to make my work into fun. I wish I were smart like Dr. Patch Adams. He seems to be making his work into fun.]

Do you believe we should love everyone? What about the jerks like my brother-in-law? Do you believe some people are jerks or is it just me that sees only their bad points?

[I don't believe we can force our self to love anyone. We either feel love for them or we don't. If we don't feel love for them, our heart has damn good reason not to love them. Love can not be forced. I have no intention to love anyone if my heart says they don't deserve it.

I attempt to treat others the way they wish to be treated. If they don't treat me with the same consideration, I try not to have any more to do with them. If they treat me right, I will treat them right. Love either happens, or it doesn't. But we still might be friends.

There are plenty of ignorant jerks around who just haven't learned what the Golden Rule is all about. Rather than hate jerks, it is more logical to feel sorry for them. They may learn and they may not. They are losers if they don't.]

Do you believe anything is possible and we only have to believe to make it true? So I can imagine me with a million dollars?

JMAMN

[There are lots of people making money on books and classes trying to make people believe this. They are getting rich from it, not you. But I believe we must believe in and trust our self to do the very best we can at whatever we undertake. Be-

lieve that we are going to succeed. That puts our minds in a position to be open to explore all possibilities and operate at their finest. If we fail, we learn what we can from that and try again. If we are determined, we probably will succeed as long as we are following the Golden Rule to do it.]

My Work into Fun?

JM has given me an idea. I should try to figure out a way to make my PES-PIS work more fun. I think I have already started. Last week I bought a used ink-jet envelop printer for \$100 that is supposed to be automatic and I hope faster than the dot matrix printer I'm now using on envelopes.

The machine I'm now using requires me to sit by it and feed it one envelope at a time and push buttons. It's very slow and boring work. Perhaps now I'll feel more like trying harder to increase my mailing list.

So this machine should remove some of my boring grunt work. What else can I do to make my work into fun?

It is kind of fun to rack my brain trying to answer the excellent questions that you readers write. These same questions are probably on many readers minds, but they may be too busy to write and express them.

I certainly encourage more people to send in their questions, doubts and comments. You will get a personal response. If you have any ideas about how to make this work more fun, please tell me about them too.

O.K., I'm the boss of me and my job. I can make any changes I want without anyones permission. The same almost goes for my life-style. Here I can make any changes that I can afford. I've already made lots of changes in my lifestyle and continue to.

I do enjoy using the computer to write the LFP and edit it. That's fun. It is fun to search all the underground newspapers and zines that come to me. It's fun to find a kindred soul once in a while. It's fun to find something meaningful and inspiring to share with LFP readers. It's fun to go to the mailbox and discover what is there for me.

I guess this may be what has been called, "counting your blessings". A person feels much better with themselves after one recounts all the good things they already have.

But to get back on track--how can I make my work more fun? You got any ideas?


A PSYCHIC'S INTERPRETATION

I am Ernest's only daughter and Eli's mom. As you can imagine this has me majorly shook up. I am reading self-help books on grieving and getting counselling; but just plain experiencing and, oddly enough, actually enjoying the grieving (sort of like being with them for the last time), has helped me move thru alot of pain and blame and anger. Everyone has a different way of dealing with everything, so I'm not saying that my way is the only way.

I spoke with a psychic in trance a couple of different times and she explained alot. Apparantly they were working together on some energetics that were different for both of them. Larry learned that there is more than one way to see things; remember how much trouble he was having trying to get Eli to "obey" (he wanted him to quit his lifestyle, which was mainly drinking and smoking), well frequently he wanted this to happen almost instantly (like one week for withdrawal). And Eli learned that anger and violence doesn't solve anything. He had free choice to make a longer/better life for himself, but he was soo chemically imbalanced (hammed is the word his friends used) that he was out of control for that moment. There was alot of anger between the 2 of them and it wasn't one sided. Apparantly verbal violence is considered fairly equal to physical violence by our higher consciousness. It was totally unpre-meditated, she said and we all agree (except the cops, who may have something to hide, you never know) especially knowing that he had a 22 pistol and chose to use a pipe wrench instead (which had been laying about in his bedroom- where it happened- because Larry was doing hot water heater repair recently) and just plain knowing Eli, he wasn't an evil fellow, just mixed up about his feelings and angry; holding too much in. And knowing my dad, he could get real angry when pushed and he was definitely at his ropes end about Eli. It was very very rare but he did have it in him still, probably bottled up or not totally resolved yet.

So, Eli apparantly felt such shock and remorse that he ended up taking his own life with the gun, according to the psychic. And he connected with Larry's spirit just before he did it and that made it okay for him. He was being chased by the cops but he didn't know that they didn't know what he did, and many of his friends figured that he just didn't want to be taken alive and face prison; he had driven around madly in an area he didn't know well and got stuck in a snowy ditch and went for help to the farthest away house out of 3. She called the cops and didn't answer the door and then he went to the closest house and made a call and she even offered him a ride which he refused. Then minutes later when the cops drove by, he headed for the woods

and moments after the cop yelled "freeze" and "identify yourself" (they thot he may be a prowler, so they say) he shot himself between the eyes. Then hours later (it was 2:15am when Eli died) they discovered Larry's body when they couldn't get an answer at the door and had to pry it open, suspecting foul play I guess, just to notify Larry of Eli's death. And a light bulb exploded in Larry's room (where they found him) causing no damage but bewildering them so much that they called the bomb squad in. And in fact, that is the basis for the cops believing that it was premeditated. There really is no sense to their decision. I wish some really good private detective would get to the bottom of this; I went out there and tried my best but in my state I wasn't very effective.

I miss my dad alot and will even more as time goes on, he had soo much love .  Now I feel that he knows that my spiritual studies are valid as I have had the biggest psychic experience of my life - given from him. He came to me 2 days after his death as a very bright light-being of love and I knew it was him. He emanated such an incredible deep feeling of love to me as if to explain it all - he is okay and released and happy. He was no longer a man or my father, he was pure love/spirit. It was soo intense for me that tears were pouring out of my eyes and yet I could see, maybe I was seeing with my heart. Then later that day, I saw Eli's spirit spiral up into the light and a couple of hours later I saw them hugging as angels - no forgiveness necessary. They loved each other soo much- thats why they chose to be together soo much this lifetime.

Their message to us is to become closer to each other and have compassion and to realize that they chose to learn their lessons this way. I know its weird to say but the psychic said that Larry was a willing victim. I saw the photos and neither of them looked as tho they suffered, just shock on Larry's face and nothing on Eli's face-as in staring into the light or distance. Because they worked soo hard together on their life's lessons, we can relax and let the past rest in peace. We all learn things in such different ways - to be able to accept it all as okay; this is invaluable.

I've just got to say this: I loved Eli soo much that I can't blame him. Sure I'm angry that he took away from me 2 of my 6 most loved people on earth but all I can see is his sweet face and personality that I adored and gavve all I had to and feel sorry for his unresolvable sadness. We all have dark sides and I guess being healthy (free of ugly addictions) helps us to make choices that are more acceptable. May we all learn from this! Amen.

☺ ♥ Hamuff - June 1, 1996